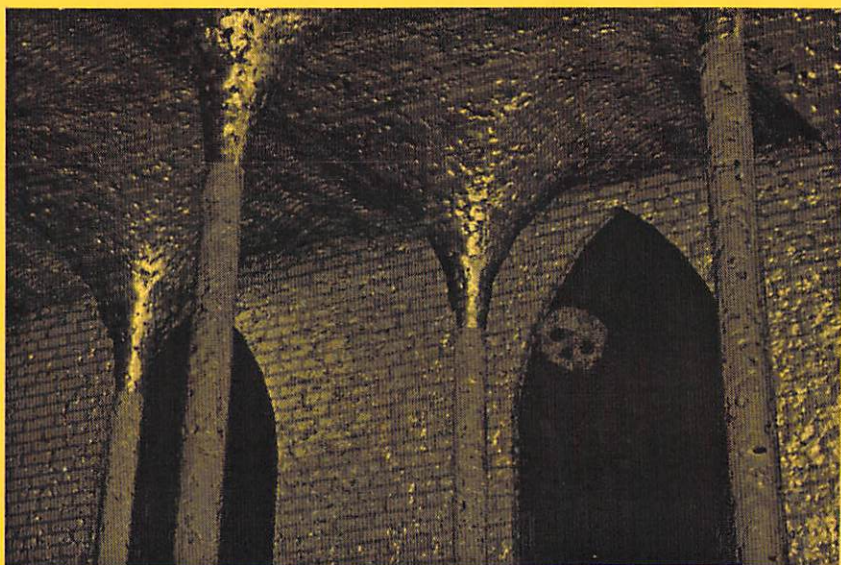




Room.jpg was made with Imagine2.0 and EssenceII. The trace took about 3 hours to complete. The models are very simple and small-about 68k in size. Essence2 is responsible for the pits etc. ----Paul Wehner

OHIO VALLEY AMIGA USERS' GROUP

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NEXT MEETING: AUG 31, 1993
ROOM 502 RIEVESCHL HALL, UC
BEGINNERS SIG AT 6:30

The President's Palaver

Ed Hoffmann

When the Amiga was introduced in 1986, there was little software available. In fact, more than a few of us can remember trying to find out how many copies of the clock program you can run simultaneously on an Amiga 1000 under AmigaDOS 1.0. However, the clearly superior hardware and operating system (intimately tied to the hardware) drove people to buy an Amiga. The early software releases were sparse and certainly not novel, but soon, we had Deluxe Paint, Deluxe Music Construction Set, Sculpt3D and others. These titles took advantage of the Amiga technology and gave life to ideas that only existed in our minds, to exist in the "real" world of glowing phosphor.

The theme of Amiga software was established: colorful, musical, innovative titles that allowed any person's pent-up creativity to wander (try that with a spreadsheet). Soon we had Vista, DigiView, PerfectSound, Silver, VideoScape, MusicX, and more. Clearly, the hardware was driving the software development. Looking over at the MS-DOS world, we saw a world of spreadsheets, infinite variations of word processors, and database applications. This was a market-driven software development approach: people bought IBM because in the corporate world, nobody ever got fired for buying IBM. The hardware was slow, single-minded, dull, and expensive.

Today, Amiga software is more powerful, versatile, and innovative: look at LightWave, VistaPro, DeluxePaint IV, Imagine, Bars and Pipes Pro, Real 3D, Scala, and AmigaVision. The distinction is still there, but the MS-DOS and Mac world have the same or similar applications, following the lead of the Amiga software development. How do you, the user, insure the continued development of the Amiga software market? Well, let's remember, the hardware and the market together drive software development. Therefore, your support is vital to the health of the Amiga marketplace. This boils down to a simple concept: if you use the software, buy it!

The pirating of software is a large influence on the likelihood of a developer's continued interest. Just look to the death of the AtariST, where software was pirated as fast as it was produced; therefore, nobody produced any more titles for that platform (incidentally, many of those developers now release software for the Amiga, so they know all too well the effects of piracy). Now, I remember the days of the Commodore 64, where the packaging looked great on the wall, but you couldn't try out the software before you bought it. I was disappointed many a time, after spending \$40 or \$50, getting home, and finding a 2 page photocopied manual! But on the Amiga, there are reviews of all the major releases, the dealers allow one to try software before buying, and there are even many demo versions available. There is even excellent shareware (such as Term, Directory Master, and Q-Blue), that allows unlimited use for evaluation purposes.

The bottom line is that the theft of intellectual property is the same as the theft of real property. The work that a programmer puts into a program, thousands of hours worth, should be rewarded, for they are the true Amiga supporters, along with the purchasers of their software.

OVAUG CLUB DISKS - The club disks are compiled by Scott Bennett for the benefit of the club. Copies are available on the BBS, at Expert, or at the meeting for \$1.50 plus disk.

JULY_93_1	
alert111.lha	gives more information from system error messages
alrtpch216.lha	gives more information from system errors
amy-internet-info.lha	Information about the internet
AR115.lha	Online magazine
ar117.lha	Online magazine
badger_1.0.lha	small util for icon management WB2+
cd32.jpg	Pic of new box from Commodore
DiskSalv11_27.lha	DiskSalv disk recovery program
DS2Install.lha	Install for DiskSalv
DSLcalle11_27.lha	Languages for DiskSalv
findhit4.lha	Helps find enforcer hits
JP_LOGO.LHA	Pic of Jurassic Park logo
newgames.lha	list of new games for the Amiga
2.1-sounds.lha	Sounds to use with SoundPrefs
5-min_news_june93.lzh	News from Genie
addmem_v1.0.lha	Program to add memory at right address
aga_icons.lha	Color Icons
aladv1.60.run	Version 1.6 of Aladdin

JULY_93_2	
fastgif2.08.lha	Ver 2.08 of fastgif
gpf201s2341.lha	Patch for GPFax
gpf221s2341.lha	Patch for GPFax
gpf230s2341.lha	Patch For GPFax
dfa12a.lha	Phone book

JULY_93_3	
Mandelmania40.lha	Mandelbrot generater
military_iff.lha	clip art
mth40lib15.lha	optimized math libs for 68040
mtool14.lha	directory utility
prtman20.lha	Print manager
gp_fax221.lha	patch for GPFax
iguanaloan1.0.lha	Intuition loan program
ispell33up.lha	GUI for ispell
kastlekumquat.lha	game

JULY_93_4	
post186.lha	Postscript file viewer
runlame.lha	Helps run old programs
magicwb.lha	superb WB icon, font and pattern package

JULY_93_5	
vpextra_jul93.lha	View Port online Magazine extras
vp_guide_jul93.lha	View Port Online Magazine
addr202.lha	Address book
yak14a.lha	Yet Another Kommodity
spider11.lha	Solitaire game
catalog6.lha	Keep track of disks
scsied.lha	editor for scsi devices
sd3.lha	Super Duper 3.0
soundoff160.lha	Plays IFF sounds
StickIt-1.01.lha	Stickit type notes for Workbench
superformat.lha	disk formatter
sysinfo3.22.lha	Gives system information
virusz307.lha	Virus checker

Minutes of the July 27, 1993 O.V.A.U.G. Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 8:15 pm by Ed Hoffmann. The attendance was about 25 people.

New Members

The following new members joined OVAUG in July:

Paul and Donald Hoskins.

Welcome to OVAUG.

OFFICER REPORTS

-VICE PRESIDENT (Drew Vogel) Drew reported that the postcards for people with expired memberships will be going out in August.

-SECRETARY (Troy Cooksey) As of this meeting we have 130 paid members. Membership dues are \$15 for a single membership and \$20 for a family membership. (If you need to pay dues or wish to join, see me at the meetings or call 661-0908 for more information). If you have something for sale or trade, then please give me a written description of the item along with your name and phone number, or you can send it to the club's post office box. Your ad will appear in three issues of the newsletter or, more or less issues, if you let me know that you need more time or that the item has sold. Also note that we have 12 for 10 Fred Fish disk copy cards available for \$15 for members and \$30 for non members. Finally, Troy has compiled a book of newsletters from all of the other user groups we exchange with. It can be found at Expert Services with the club's disk library.

-LIBRARIAN (Scott Bennett) The Fred Fish library is currently up to FF890, the CD ROM is up to FF800, the BBS has up to FF750 compressed, and there are five club disks this month. (Note: a variety of books and video tapes are now available for borrowing by club members in good standing. Scott has sign up sheets for those interested).

-TREASURER (George Gibeau) The treasury balance is currently \$100, and this is after paying for the modem, phone bill, FidoNet setup fee, and we still have \$177 on account with Fred Fish.

-TECHNICAL ADVISOR (Brick Eksten) Commodore will be shipping its CD32 game system in Europe in mid August. This is a true 32 bit CD ROM game machine which supports up to HAM 8 quality animation and has an adaptor for Mpeg decompression which will allow playback of full motion video.

-NEWSLETTER (Jeff Johnson) Jeff thanked all of the contributors to last month's issue of the newsletter. Jeff requests that if you have anything; articles, tips, bios on interesting members, etc, then please send them in. Note it does not have to be a full blown article. Anyone published in the newsletter will receive one free Fred Fish copy. Submissions can be made to the club P.O. box, to the club BBS, or to Jeff at the meetings. Also if you would like to see an article on a particular topic then let Jeff know and he will try to find someone to write on it.

-BBS ADVISOR (George Gibeau) George reported that the BBS finally met its maker in July, however a new, mightier BBS has risen from the ashes. We now are running on Remote Access with Front Door and Fidonet access. Drew Vogel is currently writing an article on using the new BBS and this will be available next month. The club's BBS phone number is 241-8817.

SIG REPORTS

-BEGINNER'S SIG (Ed Hoffmann) Ed reported that next month the SIG will not meet in lieu of a swap meet which will begin at 7:00 pm. Ed would like suggestions for up coming meeting topics. Meetings are held in Room 502 Rieveschl Hall at 6:30 pm prior to the monthly OVAUG meeting.

-GRAPHICS SIG (Bob Leibold) The Graphics SIG is currently putting together Truman Toland's documentary on the Graphics SIG and OVAUG. The next meeting will be on Tuesday, August 17 at 7:00 pm at CCV's 2114 Reading Road location. Contact Bob Leibold at 651-4171 for more details.

-AREXX SIG (Richard Hertzberg) No report. AREXX discussions are taking place on the BBS. Also note there is an AREXX file section on the BBS where your files will not get erased.

-3D Graphics SIG (Brick Eksten) The group is working on flying logo animations for Computerfest. The SIG will take place at Expert Services on the first Tuesday of every month. Call Brick at 371-9690 for more details.

OLD BUSINESS

-Anyone interested in participating in ComputerFest in August should contact Ed Hoffman (see phone number elsewhere). We are planning on having 3 tables and at least 5 stations on both days. Computerfest will take place Saturday and Sunday, August 28 and 29, from 10am to 6pm and from 10am to 4pm, respectively, at Dayton's Hara Arena. Anything you would like us to demo at the show should be given to one of the club officers.

-Picasso Boards for those who ordered them through the club deal will be available by mid August. Note the deal has been extended to club members until the end of August (\$375).

NEW BUSINESS & DISCUSSION

-Drew Vogel gave a rundown on the latest press release on Imagine 3.0. The new version will include such features as bones, kinematic movements, font and image editors, motion graphics, sound synching, AGA support, macros, field rendering, depth of field, alpha channel support, and soft edge light sources. Imagine 3.0 will be shipping in August and lists for \$649 and the upgrade from Imagine 2.0 is \$100.

-DEMONSTRATIONS

-Drew Vogel showed us the new algorithmic textures from Essence 2 for Imagine. Essence 2 lists for \$149 and can be upgraded from the original Essence for \$49.

-Ed Hoffmann showed his Computerfest logo animation which has the logo melting and then forming out of a pool of liquid metal.

-Jack Farrah gave us a preview of a Jurassic Park font he created with Typesmith. The font is available in the club disk library in Compugraphic and Postscript formats.

-Bob Frederick showed us a walking dog animation he created for Computerfest with Imagine.

-Don Myers showed a tape of more footage on his up coming Nick Dixon trailer.

-Finally, George Gibeau did a demo of The Chaos Engine. Chaos Engine is a multi-player adventure game in the tradition of Gauntlet.

\$\$\$ FOR SALE OR TRADE \$\$\$

-Bob Frederick is selling 4 meg of RAM. Contact Bob at the meeting if you are interested.

QUESTIONS???...Then contact one of your OVAUG officers!

-President.....Ed Hoffmann.....521-3424

-Vice-president.....Drew Vogel.....581-7002

-Secretary.....Troy Cooksey.....661-0908

-Treasurer.....George Gibeau.....721-1214

-Newsletter Editor.....Jeff Johnson.....651-1199

-Technical Advisor.....Brick Eksten.....371-9690

-Club Librarian.....Scott Bennett.....371-2603

-BBS Officer.....George Gibeau.....721-1214

-OVAUG BBS.....241-8817

THE OVAUG INTERVIEW - Larry Kolberg

›BORN: February 19, 1993, Hammond, Indiana

›RAISED: Calumet City, Illinois

›GRADE SCHOOL: St. Andrew, graduated 1971

›HIGH SCHOOL: Thornton Fractional North, college prep courses, graduated 1975

Favorite courses: science and geography

Extra curricular: theater (stage crew and acting), chorus

›COLLEGE: U. Chicago, Circle Campus (2 quarters)

So. Illinois, Carbondale, graduated 1981

Three degrees: 1) Photographic Technology (associate's) 2) Film (bachelor's) 3) Radio and TV (bachelor's)

›WIFE: Nora. Met in college. Nora was a fine arts major. She recently received an Honorable Mention in the Zoo's "Jungle Trails" poster competition.

›FAMILY: Andrew, born 1985

Emily, born 1988

Jeffrey, born 1990

›CAREER: Larry and Nora came to Cincinnati to look for careers.

First with Robin Color Lab, then with GE in photo department

Currently group leader of GE's high speed motion picture department.

The high speed motion pictures are shot at 10,000 frames per second, illuminated with flash bulbs sequenced by computer. Jet engines are tested by shooting gelatin slugs to simulate birds, tire treads, ice, etc. The film is studied at 24 frames per second.

›COMPUTERWISE: Sold on A1000 by reading a review in "Shutterbug" magazine
Saw "Juggler" animation at Software and More store,
bought A500 with Sculpt 3D.

Joined OVAUG in the early days, worked with George and Dwight.

Experimented with Palomax and Elf hard drive kits, earned Elf by testing, reporting, and writing test article for Prespect Technologies, the manufacturer.

›CURRENT EQUIPMENT: A2000HD, 13meg, GVP 68030, 40 mHz accelerator, DCTV

›COMPUTER INTERESTS: "Artsy" side - Imagine, DPaint, image manipulation (at work and as hobby)

›EXAMPLE: Nora's "Woman of the Year" composite picture on page 6

Stages of creation:

1) Digitize in DCTV "Newsweek" cover of Hillary Clinton

2) Digitize photo of Nora with similar pose

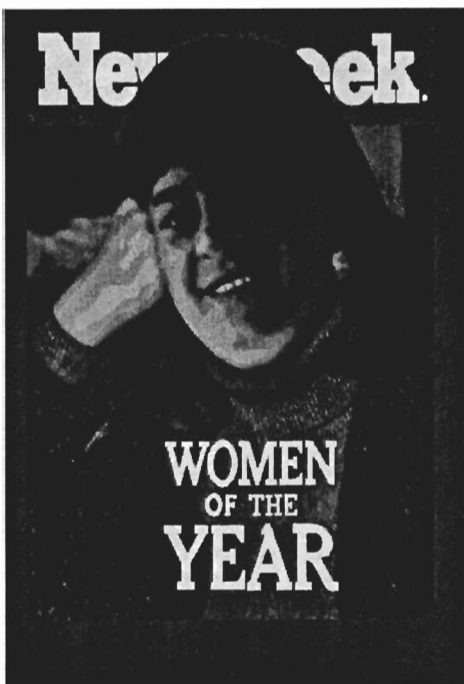
3) Made brush of Nora's face in DCTV Paint

4) Stamped Nora over Hillary, blended and smoothed. Masked mail label, and added black border.

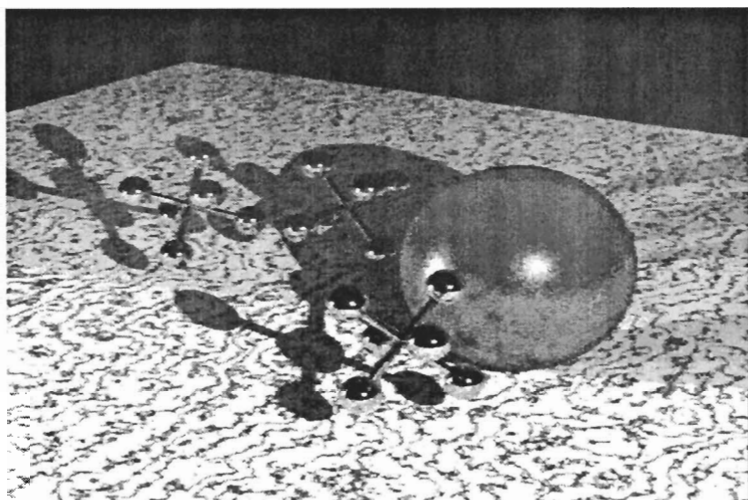
5) Sue Sturtz (an OVAUG member) retouched the image with the Firecracker paint system and ImageFX

6) Transferred the image to video tape, and then to an analog still store in order to be printed from a Canon thermal video printer.

7) Framed, matted, and presented to Nora on New Year's Eve!!!



**These are the before and after versions of making Larry's wife Nora
"Woman of the Year"**



**An IMAGINE
image Larry
created
depicting a ball
and jacks.**

The Q-Blue Offline Mail Reader

[Note: The following is taken from the doc file from the Qblue0.lha archive file on the OVAUG BBS.]

With the new OVAUG BBS software and FIDO-Net access, an off-line mail reader is almost a necessity. Q-Blue is a shareware program (\$20 fee) that is well worth the money. To try Q-Blue, download the file Qblue0.lha from the OVAUG BBS, unarchive, and install, per the supplied doc file. The selection below describes what an offline reader is, why you need one, and how to use one. - Ed Hoffmann]

»»» So, like what is an offline mail reader, eh?

It is for reading electronic mail from computer bulletin board systems, or BBSes, without tying up your telephone line while doing so. If you don't have an Amiga computer with a modem, or don't use it to call BBSes, you haven't got any use for Q-Blue. Typically, offline mail packages are created by means of a "door": a piece of software that callers to the BBS can use by giving some command to the BBS's main menu. Once the door is running, it will provide a menu of commands which allow you to select which mail you want to read, and how to package it. Once the mail is bundled up, the door lets you download it all as a single compressed file. Then you can log off from the BBS, hang up the phone, and read the mail at your leisure with an offline reader. The reader allows you to write new electronic mail messages, including replies to the ones you have downloaded. When your replies (if any) are ready, you can call the BBS again and upload them to the mail door, which will then "post" the messages in the correct places.

Why bother with all these extra steps to read your mail? Because if you don't, then your phone line is busy the whole time you read and reply to messages. The BBS's phone line is also busy, preventing other people from using it. Also, when reading online you have to create your replies using whatever minimal excuse for a text editor the BBS provides. And when reading messages, you have to put up with the slowness of text sent through modems, and possibly line noise as well.

»»» What are "QWK" and "Blue Wave"?

Whenever a door creates a packet of information to be used by an offline reader, it stores the data in a particular format which the offline reader understands. The door and the reader must agree on all the details of how this is done. Unfortunately, there are different kinds of doors which have their own incompatible standards in this area, each with its own set of readers.

"QWK" (which is pronounced "quack" by those who prefer Blue Wave) is the common name for the format of files that are produced by an offline mail door called QMail and several others that are compatible with it. The name comes from the fact that the files it creates are typically given a name that ends with ".QWK". The majority of doors for offline mail are compatible with QMail and produce message bundles of this type. The format of .QWK files is public knowledge, and new doors and offline readers using this format are being created all the time.

"Blue Wave" is a different format for offline mail, which the doors and readers based on QWK format are not compatible with. It has several advantages: it can be used to send private Netmail messages between BBSes linked by networks such as FidoNet, and it allows one to specify, while offline, the criteria by which the door should select mail for future downloads. Unfortunately, this version of Q-Blue has not implemented these special features yet. Also it avoids the shortcomings of the QWK format which cause the subject lines of messages to be shortened to 25 characters and peoples' names to be converted to all uppercase. The main disadvantage of Blue Wave is that, before the release

of Q-Blue, it was available from only one source (Cutting Edge Computing, formerly known as Blue Wave Software), since the format is not yet public knowledge. Hence, it is not as popular or widely supported as the older QWK format is, though it is gaining ground.

»»» How do I use Q-Blue?

First, you have to set it up. This is the least obvious part of using the program, and is covered in detail in the full doc file. Once the setup is finished, a typical use would go something like this:

1) Log on to the BBS that has the mail you want to read, as you normally would.

2) Use whatever command the BBS provides to start up the mail door. The door will pack the mail into a file using some archiving program such as LHA, and then let you download that file by some protocol such as ZModem. [Ed. note: On the OVAUG BBS, select [Z] Offline Services from the main menu.]

3) Log off of the BBS, and start up Q-Blue. It will present you with a mostly blank screen, with some gadgets at the bottom, one of which is labeled "Open". Click it. Q-Blue will display a list of files in the directory that your downloads are kept in. The file you just downloaded should be the first one listed in the window; others are listed in order of increasing age. To read this file, just press the return key or the space bar. Q-Blue will attempt to unpack this file for reading.

4) After showing you the operation of the unpacking program in a text window (assuming the unpacking is successful), Q-Blue will show you a window which lists the different message areas in which mail exists. If you want to start at the beginning, just press return or the spacebar, or click the closebox.

5) Now you are reading the mail. The author, addressee, subject, area, and date are shown at the top of the screen, and the text is shown in the middle. If the message is too big to fit on the screen, you can scroll by pressing the spacebar. To see the next message, you can press the spacebar when the bottom of the message is shown on the screen, or click the gadget labeled "Next" at the bottom of the screen. When you reach the last message in the area you are reading, pressing the spacebar or clicking the "Next" gadget causes the window listing the message areas to reappear. If you want to keep reading the messages in order, just press return or the spacebar as before. You can read through all the messages in the entire packet just by pressing the spacebar.

6) At some point you may see a message you want to reply to. To do this, click the gadget at the bottom of the screen labeled "Reply". Up will pop a window which shows who the message is from (you), who it is to (the author of the message you are replying to), and the subject line of the message (which by default is the same as the subject of the message being replied to, with "Re: " added in front). Click the "Edit" gadget, and your text editor should appear, ready to edit your reply. If you have used the "Quoting" feature, the message you are replying to will be shown in the editor, with ">" characters all down the left margin. You should now select the parts of the message that you want to mention in your reply, and use only those parts in your reply. Then type in what you want to say. When finished, tell the editor to save the file and exit. Click "Save" and your reply will be stored and the window will close. Use the "Cancel" button if you want to throw your reply away.

7) When you've read all the messages, you need to create an upload packet containing your replies. Unless you wrote no replies, the gadget in the lower left corner of the screen is labeled "Pack"; click it, and Q-Blue will then compress all your replies into a single file you can upload, using the same archiving method that it used to unpack the messages you read. The gadget in the lower left corner will now read "Close", as it does when no replies have yet been written. You can use this gadget to tell Q-Blue to clear this message packet from its memory when you're done reading it. Or instead, you can use the "Quit" gadget to exit Q-Blue.

8) If you wrote any replies, it's time now to call the BBS back. Log on (continued on p. 18)

modes with up to 16.7 million colors at resolutions as high as 800x600.

Picasso II RTG means No Waiting for Specially Programmed Versions of Your Favorite Software.

The Picasso II RTG emulator is completely integrated into the system. Imagine being able to run the latest software packages like ProPage 4.1, PageStream 2.2, Cygnus Ed 3.5, Deluxe Music Construction Set 2.0, AmigaVision Professional and many others at resolutions up to 1280x1024 and up to 256 colors. All system friendly Amiga software packages will be able to take advantage of the new screen modes offered by the Picasso II.

Picasso II RTG means Hi-Performance.

The Picasso II has an on-board Blitter which supports drawing speeds up to 30 megabytes per second. The Picasso II Blitter has been fully integrated into the RTG emulator. Any program running under the RTG emulator will automatically take advantage of the Blitter. Off screen displays are moved into Picasso II display memory using the Blitter for super fast screen updates.

**Expert
Services**

7559 Mall Road

Florence, KY 40142 U.S.A.

TEL: 606-371-9690

FAX: 606-282-5942



**Village
Tronic**

Braunstrasse 14

D-30169 Hannover-Germany

Tel: + 49(0)511/13841

FAX: + 49(0)511/1612606

The following names are trademarks of the indicated companies: Picasso II RTG: Expert Services, Professional Page, Gold Disk Inc., Pagestream, Soft-Logic Publishing, Deluxe Music Construction Set, Electronic Arts, Amiga, AmigaVision Professional & Workbench, Commodore Amiga, Inc., Art Department Professional & Cygnus Ed, ASDG Inc., ImageFX, Great Valley Products, Inc., Imagemaster, Black Bells Systems, Real 3D, RealSoft International, TVPaint Jr., Techsoft Images.

The Picasso II RTG emulator has been designed so that it uses no chip ram for its emulation. Only the currently visible display is kept in the Picasso II display memory, all other screens are stored in standard system memory. This means that all system memory can be used as graphics memory. A system equipped with 16 megabytes of ram would be like having a 16 megabyte graphics board!

Picasso II RTG means Maximum Compatibility.

The Picasso II RTG emulator supports Workbench 2.04, 2.1, 3.0, and beyond. The Picasso II is compatible with any Zorro II or Zorro III equipped Amiga system, such as the A2000, A3000, or A4000.

Picasso II AutoSwitch means One Monitor.

The Picasso II comes with a built in electronic switch that automatically routes the proper signal to your monitor. When the AutoSwitch detects non-Picasso II screens, such as those used by games and older software, it automatically routes the signal directly to your monitor. When the AutoSwitch senses a Picasso II screen mode, it will automatically switch back.

The Picasso II comes packaged with TVPaint Jr. (24 Bit Paint Program), and drivers for ArtDept Professional, ImageFX, ImageMaster, and Real 3D 2.0.

***Re-tar-get-able Graphics adj.:** The ability to run software on any third party graphics board. See also: Picasso II.

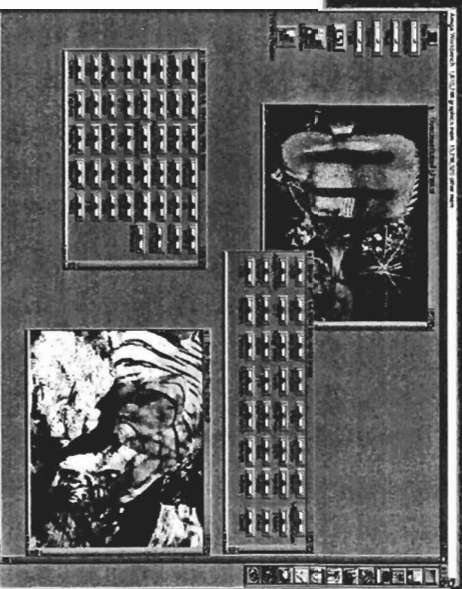
Picasso II

Retargetable Graphics* have arrived!
24 bit graphics for your Amiga®

Picasso II RTG (Retargetable Graphics) means Incredible New Graphics Power for your Amiga.

Providing greater resolutions and more speed than AGA systems and the ability to run system friendly AGA software, the Picasso II is a next generation graphics display system. Your Amiga will be able to run all the latest software at resolutions up to 1280 x 1024 with 256 colors on screen. The Picasso II also supports custom screen

1280 x 1024
256 color
Workbench screen
displayed on an
A3000 with the
Picasso II.



Picasso II RTG means No More 'Chip Ram Blues'

Amiga Maintenance Tips

O. Watagu Siam

Like any other electronic device, the Amiga needs periodic maintenance to maintain your system at peak efficiency. These tasks can be easily performed by the user, provided you are comfortable with dealing with hardware. Listed below are some of the most common computer maintenance practices.

After a long period of use, many files get deleted. These files are removed from the system and put in the bit bucket. Therefore, it is important to empty the bit bucket periodically, or the system may run a little slow. This can be easily accomplished by carefully removing the bit bucket, putting your hand over the top as a lid, and dumping the contents into any trashcan, being careful not to spill the bits all over the carpet. Occasionally, a vacuum is necessary to remove the last few bits.

Another common practice is to re-anchor the floating point processors. After heavy use, the floating point processor can float excessively, and it must be fixed to its mooring. Care must be taken not to exert excessive force, or you may turn the floating point processor into a fixed point processor.

Although often overlooked, the hard drive must occasionally be removed and tempered so the drive does not go soft (or floppy). This could result in the loss of data, as the bits get stuck on the soft drive. By heating the drive platters over a bunsen burner, the stiffness returns, returning performance to near new conditions.

Refilling of the RAM chips is necessary after several years of use, so that a constant supply of bits is available. It is not advisable to recycle the bits from the bit bucket, as they are never as reliable the second time around, and may cause erratic system performance.

The monitor also requires periodic maintenance, to refill the red, green, and blue phosphors. If your monitor is looking a little dull and colorless, check the phosphor storage bin. Replacement phosphor dots are commercially available; however, since this is a high voltage device, adding phosphors should not be attempted by the user.

Simple routine maintenance can keep your system in top running condition, much like your car or house. Performed regularly, this can avoid expensive repair bills in the future.

(Note: The above are not necessarily the views of OVAUG, it's members or officers, or any other sane, rational human being. None of these "tips" are endorsed, nor even suggested, unless you want a good laugh or an expensive repair bill for your machine or yourself ;-)).

ON USING THE NEW OVAUG BBS SOFTWARE

Drew Vogel

August, 1993

The Cafe' BBS, 1:108/245

606-581-7877

As users of the OVAUG BBS (Bulletin Board System) will have noticed by now, the BBS software has changed. The reason for this change is that the IBM hardware crashed, forcing George to re-initialize the system. He felt that this would be an excellent time to install the new software I've been hounding him about forever. So, he asked me to come over, luring me with the promise of a free meal (that he didn't cook [thanks Jeff & Steph!]), and assist him in installing the new BBS software. Several (and I mean SEVERAL) hours later, we came up for air; the new software mostly installed, and the BBS lurched back to life.

The purpose of this article is to give BBS users an introduction to the new software and illustrate its strengths and many uses.

OVERVIEW OF THE NEW BBS

The bulk of the new software system is comprised of three separate pieces: FrontDoor 2.02, which acts as the 'mailer' section of the system, RemoteAccess 1.11 (soon to be 2.00 +), which is a full-blown 'BBS' which services the needs of the remote user, and FastEcho which is the 'mail tosser/packer'. The mailer, BBS, and mail tosser could be any combination of several programs out there, but FrontDoor and RemoteAccess provide ease-of-use and considerable power, and FastEcho is easy to set up, and is very quick. There are a number of other, incidental, programs which make up a complete BBS, but we're concentrating on the main parts. I will be explaining, in greater detail, the function and purpose of the mailer and BBS segments. Since the operation of the mail tosser is transparent to the user, it will be referred to in the article, but not explored in depth.

A TOUCH OF FIDONET

This new BBS setup links the OVAUG BBS into the world of FidoNet, which is an international low-cost network of message bases. Computers automatically connect with one another to exchange messages and, often, files. A properly set up system could function without human intervention providing mail and files to a slew of other systems, which in turn supply other systems, and so on...

THE BBS TALKS TO ITSELF!

The way the mailer and BBS components of this new system function together is very interesting. From a master script filled with IFs, GOTOs, and ERROR-LEVELS, the mailer is launched. It is the function of the mailer to do a number of things: monitor the phone line for incoming calls, determine if the incoming call is human or computer, and act accordingly. The mailer has other responsibilities, basically everything EXCEPT dealing with human users, but for the purpose of

this article we will highlight only those mailer functions that have some pertinence to users.

THE MAILER: FrontDoor:

It's a dark and stormy night...

The mailer waits...

The phone rings!

The mailer answers the call:

If the incoming call is a human (i.e.: Paul Wehner calling in to read his messages), then the mailer quits with an ERRORLEVEL which, in the master script, executes a command like 'IF ERRORLEVEL 190 GOTO CallingUser'. The CallingUser function would handle changing the current directory from the mailer directory to the BBS directory and executing the BBS program. One of the ways that the computer checks for a human caller is requesting that the human press keys, which is one reason for the soon-to-be-familiar 'Press ESCape for OVAUG BBS'. Then, RemoteAccess (the BBS) executes standard security checks (name and password, etc.) before allowing the user into the system.

Because computers within the FidoNet network have some autonomy, they can call and deliver waiting mail to other systems automatically (without human intervention) during programmed 'events'. If the call is coming from another computer calling automatically to collect or send mail, FrontDoor senses this and checks session passwords & accesses, and trades mail with the other system, sending waiting mail and receiving any new mail, along with other special business like file transfers. After the connection with the other system is completed, an ERRORLEVEL turns control over to the mail tosser, and message base importing and exporting is performed, along with any other special functions defined by the SysOp.

A 'LITTLE BLACK BOOK' FOR COMPUTERS?

The computers in FidoNet contact each other by using a file called the NODELIST. The NodeList is a gigantic 'phone book' which tells each BBS the address and telephone number of all other systems in FidoNet. The address is a series of numbers which describe the geographic region of the system. For example, the OVAUG BBS has a 'net/node number' (address) of 1:108/190. The '1' indicates North American Zone, the '108' is the Network serving the Ohio area, and '190' is the individual Node number. A different system will have another series of numbers, like 1:108/245, which indicates a system within the same Zone and Net, but a different Node number. Each week, nodes are added and deleted from the NodeList. Instead of distributing a completely new NodeList each week (well over 1.5 megs), only the changes are sent to each node to keep the 'phone book' up to date. An additional function of FrontDoor is to handle the updating and compiling of the NodeList as 'difference' files are sent weekly to notify of additions, deletions, or changes to the NodeList.

All of this is somewhat complicated (and, surprisingly, it's been greatly simplified for this article). However, it is worth the complexity!

Only free networks like FidoNet allow you to converse with users across the country and world, at no (or very little) cost to yourself.

The mailer offers many other features, the operation of which are invisible to the user, but the benefits are great. Things like FileAttaches, FileRequests, script execution, scheduled automatic maintenance, dial out, Multiple NetWork memberships, auto-file updating, and many other complicated things function in the background to make the system better... More on these in another article.

THE BBS: RemoteAccess:

This section deals with features that users may not have encountered on other BBSs. It is NOT a tutorial for general BBS use.

IBM-BASED BBS PROGRAMS & FLEXIBILITY

A strength of IBM-based BBSs is the modular approach that many take. IBM BBSs allow the SysOp to instruct any menu key to execute a DOS script, send control to another program (via a DOOR, see below), or call a built-in BBS function, among other options. When the SysOp defines keystrokes on the BBS, almost anything is possible, even if the BBS doesn't have the specific feature built-in. For example, some BBS programs have file area functions that are not robust enough for the needs of the system, so the SysOp can 'replace' the file areas with another that is stronger. It is even possible, though somewhat inefficient, to have one BBS launch another complete BBS program (i.e.. "Press 'X' to enter Xtra BBS")!

DOORS

By using a DOOR program, which is a specially-written program that hooks into the BBS, the SysOp can add functionality to the system which wasn't initially there, like the full-screen editor on the OVAUG BBS, or an improved message or file handling system. A strength of this is that SysOps and users don't have to wait for a new release of the BBS program to use features that the BBS author may have added. Doors are fairly easy to write, and therefore can be released more frequently than BBS programs.

BBS OPERATION

When the mailer gives control to the BBS via an ERRORLEVEL, the user is prompted for their name and password, or the new user function is called. Once the user secures an account, the BBS opens up to them, offering a slew of fascinating features, uncompromising power, and lots to do!

We will discuss the file & message area operations since these are the most widely used areas and may be slightly confusing to some users. Most of our time will be spent in & around the message area, since that has some new ideas to learn and understand.

FILE AREAS

It is difficult to describe the operation of file areas, because RemoteAccess is by nature a highly customizable program. Since this overview was written, George has added a FileDoor to improve file operations.

As BBS users know, a great attraction to a particular system is the file areas. Here you can exchange programs, ideas, art, utilities, music, objects, and data with other users. RemoteAccess recognizes this attraction, and provides excellent support for a variety of file area formats, with enough power to satisfy even the largest systems. The new version of RemoteAccess adds even greater power.

FIND THAT FILE

RemoteAccess allows a user to search for files based on a number of criteria, from filename (or partial name) to a word in the description. Once the file is located, it can be downloaded using one of several built-in or external file protocols. Users can search for files in their current (local) file area (for example, if you're logged into the Utilities directory, searching only that area), or globally which means that RemoteAccess will search the entire filebase for a match. If multiple matches are found, the user can select the one(s) that best suit the need.

RemoteAccess 2.00 will also offer built-in CD-ROM support. Currently, the best CD-ROM support comes from external FileDoors. Additional file area features include file tagging (you don't have to remember filenames - just tell the system to (T)ag the number of your selection(s) and they're autoMAGICally added to your file queue), archive viewing and manipulation (select just the specific files you want out of archive(s) and have them archived and sent), and online text-file viewing. Not all these features are built into RemoteAccess; some come from Doors.

DOWNLOADING (GETTING A FILE FROM THE BBS)

When the user has located a file she'd like to try, the method of getting the file from the BBS to her system is called Downloading. Downloading is the process of transferring a copy of the file from the hard drive of the BBS, across the modem, to the system sitting on the user's desk.

RemoteAccess allows the user to select the file transfer protocol (ZModem is best), transfer multiple files in one go (most protocols support this), and automatically disconnect after the transfer.

FILE COMPRESSION

Once the file is received at the user's end, it usually must be uncompressed before it is useful. Compression is a method of compacting the file into a small, easily-transportable package. A benefit is that an archive can contain multiple files, so all support files can be included in one convenient package, reducing the chance of a user missing a needed file. Archives have other benefits. They're smaller than the uncompressed executables, thereby maximizing drive space, and, due to the smaller size, they transfer across the modem more quickly than uncompressed versions.

There is, however, a trade-off. The archive must first be un-compressed before use on the user's end. This additional step is usually not a problem, and once all the various archive utilities are obtained, it quickly becomes second nature.

Below is an overview of the most popular compression programs available. The term 'Extension' refers to the extension added on to the filename to indicate an archive. For example, a file named DrewPic may become DrewPic.LHA when archived, to indicate that the program LHA was used to create the archive.

Extension	Amiga Program Name, description
ARC	ARC, old standby. Lousy compression, slow, but the first available.
ZOO	ZOO, another oldie. Better & faster than ARC, but is not terribly efficient by today's standards.
ZIP	IBM-based. Good balance between speed and compression. This is arguably the most widely-used compression tool out there.
LHA	LHA/LHARC, good compression, good speed. On the Amiga, this is about the best file compression tool available.
ARJ	IBM-based. Excellent compression, very good speed, but IBM only (for now). I cannot wait for this to be brought to the Amiga!
DMS	DMS, a disk-based compressor. Compresses complete disks - the copy sent over the modem is an identical disk to the original. One-of-a-kind utility.

UPLOADING (SENDING TO THE BBS)

Once you've created your masterpiece, be it art, music, a 3d object, writing, an animation, or a feat of programming excellence, you'll want to share it with other users. A way, arguably the best way, to get it to the public is via the modem and BBSs which are networked together. By sending a file to a system (compressed, of course [see above]), you make it available to anyone who wants to download it; if you can get it on a networked machine, the file will wind its way across the country, and sometimes go international as well.

To upload, select the upload command from the file menu (key presses are not given, since they are different from system to system), select a protocol if prompted. Next, tell your terminal program to Send or Upload the file, using the same protocol you specified. The file will be uploaded, then you can enter a description of the file.

RemoteAccess allows users to send multiple files at a go. It remembers the filenames and prompts for descriptions after the upload. The OVAUG BBS puts all uploads directly online, so it is important to be in the correct file area for the type of file you're sending. For example, if you upload a VistaPro landscape to the Music directory, you're creating work for the SysOp (who has to move the file to the right place), and indicating that you don't have the forethought to change to the right directory.

MESSAGE AREAS

RemoteAccess recognizes that the mainstay of BBSing is the transfer of information from via messaging. Many features to assist in messaging are available to RemoteAccess users.

The OVAUG BBS offers Private messages (just like a sealed envelope with the recipient's name on it hung on a cork board), local messages (these messages live only on the OVAUG board [much like a non-networked system's message areas]), as well as the two components of the FidoNet system, NetMail and EchoMail.

In order to explain the difference between NetMail and EchoMail, I will use the example I cited at the last OVAUG meeting. If User A on one side of a crowded room wants to send a message to User Z on the other side of the room, NetMail would be like User A writing a message and throwing it directly to User Z. EchoMail would be like User A writing a message, passing it to User B who passes it to User C, and so on until it gets to User Z with each stop keeping and distributing a copy.

Each method has its benefits and drawbacks. EchoMail is slow but free, and many people will see the message. This is excellent for a 'For Sale' message addressed to ALL, or if a user needs help with a problem. NetMail is a very direct method of communication, and it is considerably faster since the source system calls the destination system directly. However, the cost of sending NetMail can be high, due to long distance charges. Also, additional information is needed before NetMail can be sent. The sender must know the address and username of the destination. The username is not hard to get, but for users it is sometimes difficult to get net/node numbers. Most SysOps don't allow users access to non-local NetMail to prevent runaway long distance charges.

ECHOMAIL

As a user, the process of sending EchoMail is virtually transparent. If the user is comfortable with entering or replying to messages on the old OVAUG board, then EchoMail will be no trouble. Simply go to one of the message bases involved in FidoNet, called 'echos', and enter a message to a specific user or to ALL. The message will be packed and sent after you hang up, and, assuming the user logs onto a BBS that carries the echo and sees the message, it will eventually get to the user. There is no name checking or guarantee that the user WILL see the message, but at the cost, who can complain?

Users will have already noticed that the echos are very busy places. Many echos are international, and many megabytes of new information comes through a system in a week. The best advice is to pick a few echos that interest you, read them for a while without replying to see what the tone of the echo is like, then become involved by entering messages if you choose.

Within FidoNet, there are a number of rules and courtesies in the echos. Some of them are listed below.

- People assume you're grateful for their help. Don't waste bandwidth by sending 'Thank You' messages. I usually put 'Thanks in advance' at the end of my messages.
- Make sure your posts are on topic and pertinent.
- Don't be annoying, or easily annoyed.

- Consider, before posting, that the message you'll write will be seen all over the country, and sometimes the world. Make sure you don't waste people's time by writing junk.
- Never post messages in a message area asking "What's this area all about?", or the like. By reading the echo before posting, you can find out.
- If you're offended by an echo, don't read it.
- Profanity is prohibited in most echos. Remember that kids have computers and modems too...
- Most echos require the use of the user's real name, and prohibit 'handles' from being used. There are exceptions, but not too many.
- Almost all echos post rules from time to time. Read them, and heed them. It will guide you to the acceptable practice within the echo.
- Don't discuss illegal things in echos.
- Have fun, and use the resources offered to you...

CONCLUSION: The End of the Article:

The world of BBSing is an exciting, informative one, and the installation of the new software opens many doors to users. More and more information will become available as OVAUG BBS stretches slowly out into the world of FidoNet.

FidoNet serves to connect OVAUG to the rest of the world and to the great wealth of information of other users. OVAUG itself contains a great wealth of computer knowledge and talent. Be quick to share the knowledge that you have. It will be returned to you tenfold. Get involved!

The OVAUG BBS will continue to change over the next several months. RemoteAccess is in the process of being updated to version 2.00, so there will be changes associated with that, and as George & I add more and more features, expect great new things. Just on the horizon, there is the addition of an offline reader door, file networks to bring the latest & greatest PD software to OVAUG, more message areas, and (possibly) the addition of some online Door games.

If there is anything you would like to see on the OVAUG BBS, let us know. There are so many enhancements available that it is a bit daunting to try and figure what people want.

Additionally, to those ANSI artists out there, OVAUG still is in desperate need of nice colorful graphics for the BBS... Contact Drew Vogel for information.

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again, start the mail door again, and tell it to receive a reply upload. Send the file when it tells you to, wait for it to post the messages it got, and log off again. You're all done. If you wish to save calls, you can wait till the next time you want to download, and do your uploading in the same call, just before downloading.

To pay the shareware fee for Q-Blue, or if you find any bugs or have any suggestions for improving it, here are some ways you may be able to get hold of the author. Note that those who buy the registered version are going to get taken a lot more seriously than those who use the freely distributable one. Here are some addresses:

Paper mail: Paul Kienitz 6430 San Pablo Ave. Oakland, CA 94608 USA
 Usenet: paulk@terapin.com
 Fido netmail: try 1:125/28, addressed to "Paul Kienitz"
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